

April 20th, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a frequent visitor to Meadowdale Beach Park since it opened in 1988. It has become apparent to me and to others that the culvert which doubles as passage for both fish and humans attempting to reach Puget Sound is no longer functional. As a community we feel the need to tell you just how important Meadowdale Beach Park is to all of us. We would like a solution to be reached so we may safely access Puget Sound. It is equally important for salmon to have access so they may continue to thrive and spawn.

I'd like to tell you why the Park is important to so many of us and why it must be maintained and preserved for the greater community and generations to come.

Officially opening in 1988 it has become a destination for many people from both local and regional communities. Each and every day the parking lot fills and often overflows with those eager to connect with nature.

The trail descends into a beautifully forested valley and continues for a mile and a quarter in each direction. Lund's Gulch originates outside of the park, and follows the trail to Puget Sound through a railroad culvert. The hillsides to the north and south ascend steeply and are covered in Douglas Firs, Cedars and other native plants. The return trail is a very gradual climb but becomes steeper approximately 1/4 mile before the parking lot. People of all ages use this trail.

Lund's Gulch Creek is home to the threatened steelhead salmon as well as chum, coho and sea-run cutthroat trout, and reaches Puget Sound after traveling through a culvert that also doubles as a passage for people and fish. There is a beautiful meadow just before the culvert which is used by many for picnics, volleyball, horseshoe, school outings and other celebrations during spring and summer months. During the winter months the meadow is quite muddy. The beach offers spectacular views of the Olympic Mountains, Whidbey Island, and the Kitsap Peninsula.

People come here to exercise, take photos, enjoy the views, walk their dogs, skip stones on the water, discover treasures on the beach at low tide and other times, relax, picnic, beach walk, bird watch, even whale watch (a rare treat), and in late October and November look for the return of spawning salmon. There are an endless number of shorebirds and marine birds and migrating birds that are part of the landscape at Meadowdale Beach Park. Eagles are easy to spot as well as Herons. It is also an important habitat for owls and woodpeckers. Crows are everywhere and studied by University of Washington students and professors. If you are lucky you'll spot a river otter, sea lion pups, a deer or a mountain beaver.

The culvert at Meadowdale Beach Park has become a longstanding problem since 2010 and probably before that.

What has been noticeable to everyone using the park and attempting to get to the beach is that the culvert is frequently flooded by high water in winter and increasingly during other seasons. The grated walkway becomes clogged with sediment from storm water run off which contributes to ongoing erosion of the steep hillsides descending into the park. Around the end of Oct. each year since 2010 the platform/grate is lifted so the salmon – chum, coho, and sea run cutthroat trout may return to spawn. Chinook were found to be using Lunds Gulch as a rearing habitat during a study in 2013 by Tom Murdock, Executive Director of Adopt-A-Stream Foundation at the request of the Tulalip Tribe. When the grate is removed, people no longer have safe access to the beach. Even when the grate is present it is often covered with water. When that happens people find creative ways to deal with the problem. They stack logs and driftwood and boards hoping to find a dry way through the culvert. Some folks walk through the freezing cold water, and others climb over the railroad tracks. Most folks never get to the beach. None of these options are safe. None of these options solve this ongoing problem.

It is important for Lunds Gulch to remain a viable salmon habitat. It would help salmon if people were not competing for the same space disrupting their habitat. It would help people if there were a larger and better-designed opening to provide access and at the same time restore the natural beach ecology. Opening up the tunnel would allow for better connectivity of the fresh and saltwater bodies. Removing the rock barrier would improve habitat, wildlife migration, salmon migration and improve the views.

We support Snohomish County Parks and Recreation's Engineers in their quest for a grant to begin the process of finding a solution that works for everyone.

Thank you,

Barbara Ingram
Barbara Ingram
Administrator

Friends of Meadowdale Beach Park Facebook Page

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May

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